

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A chewing gum comprising:

a coated gum center, wherein ~~including a metal salt that is designed to provide breath freshening characteristics to a consumer of the chewing gum; and~~

a the gum center and coating both that at least substantially surrounds the gum center include a metal salt that is designed to provide breath freshening characteristics to a consumer of the chewing gum.

Claim 2 (original): The chewing gum of Claim 1 wherein the coating includes a surfactant.

Claim 3 (original): The chewing gum of Claim 2 wherein the surfactant is a non-ionic surfactant selected from the group consisting of poly (C₂-C₄-alkoxy) esters of C₁₈-C₂₀ fatty acids, C₄-C₂₀ alkyl poly (C₂-C₄-alkoxy) esters of C₈-C₂₀ fatty acids, poly (C₂-C₄ alkoxy) esters of sorbitan, poly (C₂-C₄ alkoxy) – C₁-C₂₀ alcohols, polyethylene glycols, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 4 (original): The chewing gum of Claim 1 wherein the metal salt is chosen from the group consisting of food acceptable zinc and copper salts.

Claim 5 (original): The chewing gum of Claim 1 wherein the metal salt includes a zinc salt selected from the group consisting of: zinc stearate; zinc acetate; zinc gluconate; zinc lactate; zinc ammonium sulfate; zinc chromate; zinc citrate; zinc dithionate; zinc fluorosilicate; zinc tartrate; zinc formate; zinc iodide; zinc nitrate; zinc phenol sulfonate; zinc salicylate; zinc sulfate; zinc succinate; zinc glycerophosphate; and zinc halides.

Claim 6 (original): The chewing gum of Claim 1 wherein the metal salt includes a copper salt selected from the group consisting of: copper stearate; copper acetate; copper gluconate; copper lactate; copper ammonium sulfate; copper chromate; copper citrate; copper dithionate; copper fluorosilicate; copper tartrate; copper formate; copper iodide; copper nitrate; copper phenol sulfonate; copper salicylate; copper sulfate; copper succinate; copper glycerophosphate; and copper halides.

Claim 7 (original): The chewing gum of Claim 2 wherein the coating includes an edible oil.

Claim 8 (original): The chewing gum of Claim 1 wherein the coating includes a cooling agent.

Claim 9 (original): The chewing gum of Claim 8 wherein the cooling agent is selected from the group consisting of: menthol; monomenthyl succinate and salts thereof; cyclic carboxamides; acyclic carboxamides; menthyl acetate; menthyl lactate; menthone ketals; 3-menthoxypropane-1,2 diol; and mixtures thereof.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The chewing gum of Claim 1 including at least one beneficial component selected from the group consisting of: fluoride salts; calcium salts; pyrophosphates; polyphosphates; antibacterial agents; cetylpyridinium chloride; chlorhexidine; essential oil mixtures containing menthol, eucalyptol, methyl salicylate, and thymol; botanical extracts; tooth desensitizing agents; potassium nitrate; plaque surface adhesion inhibitors; polydimethylsiloxane/surfactant; abrasive agents; silicas; surfactants; sodium laurel sulfate; and antibiotics.

Claim 11 (original): The chewing gum of Claim 7 wherein the edible oil is a vegetable oil.

Claim 12 (currently amended): A chewing gum product comprising:
a metal salt;
a gum center including a water-soluble portion, a water-insoluble portion, wherein the gum center includes the metal salt; and
a coating surrounding the gum center, including a cooling agent and a metal salt.

Claim 13-14 (cancelled)

Claim 15 (original): The chewing gum of Claim 12 wherein the coating includes a surfactant.

Claim 16 (original): The chewing gum of Claim 15 wherein the surfactant is a non-ionic surfactant selected from the group consisting of poly (C₂-C₄-alkoxy) esters of C₁₈-C₂₀ fatty acids, C₄-C₂₀ alkyl poly (C₂-C₄-alkoxy) esters of C₈-C₂₀ fatty acids, poly (C₂-C₄ alkoxy) esters of sorbitan, poly (C₂-C₄ alkoxylated) – C₁-C₂₀ alcohols, polyethylene glycols, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 17 (original): The chewing gum of Claim 12 wherein the metal salt is chosen from the group consisting of zinc and copper.

Claim 18 (original): The chewing gum of Claim 12 wherein the metal salt includes a zinc salt selected from the group consisting of: zinc stearate; zinc acetate; zinc gluconate; zinc lactate; zinc ammonium sulfate; zinc chromate; zinc citrate; zinc dithionate; zinc fluorosilicate; zinc tartrate; zinc formate; zinc iodide; zinc nitrate; zinc phenol sulfonate; zinc salicylate; zinc sulfate; zinc succinate; zinc glycerophosphate; and zinc halides.

Claim 19 (original): The chewing gum of Claim 12 wherein the metal salt includes a copper salt selected from the group consisting of: copper stearate; copper acetate; copper gluconate; copper lactate; copper ammonium sulfate; copper chromate; copper citrate; copper dithionate; copper fluorosilicate; copper tartrate; copper formate; copper iodide; copper nitrate; copper phenol sulfonate; copper salicylate; copper sulfate; copper succinate; copper glycerophosphate; and copper halides.

Claim 20 (currently amended): The chewing gum of Claim ~~13~~ 12 wherein the coating includes an edible oil.

Claim 21-27 (cancelled)

Claim 28 (currently amended): A product that provides breath freshening properties comprising:

a gum center including a metal salt selected from the group consisting of zinc and copper salts, a water-soluble portion, a water-insoluble portion; and

a coating surrounding the gum center, including a cooling agent and a metal salt selected from the group consisting of zinc and copper salts.

Claim 29 (original): The chewing gum of Claim 28 wherein the coating includes an edible oil.

Claim 30 (original): The chewing gum of Claim 28 wherein the metal salt includes a zinc salt selected from the group consisting of: zinc stearate; zinc acetate; zinc gluconate; zinc lactate; zinc ammonium sulfate; zinc chromate; zinc citrate; zinc dithionate; zinc fluorosilicate; zinc tartrate; zinc formate; zinc iodide; zinc nitrate; zinc phenol sulfonate; zinc salicylate; zinc sulfate; zinc succinate; zinc glycerophosphate; and zinc halides.

Claim 31 (original): The chewing gum of Claim 28 wherein the metal salt includes a copper salt selected from the group consisting of: copper stearate; copper acetate; copper gluconate; copper lactate; copper ammonium sulfate; copper chromate; copper citrate; copper dithionate; copper fluorosilicate; copper tartrate; copper formate; copper iodide; copper nitrate; copper phenol sulfonate; copper salicylate; copper sulfate; copper succinate; copper glycerophosphate; and copper halides.

Claim 32 (original): The chewing gum of Claim 28 wherein the cooling agent is selected from the group consisting of: menthol; monomenthyl succinate and salts thereof; cyclic carboxamides; acyclic carboxamides; menthyl acetate; menthyl lactate; menthone ketals; 3-menthoxypropane-1,2 diol; and mixtures thereof.

Claim 33 (previously presented): The chewing gum of Claim 28 including at least one beneficial component selected from the group consisting of: fluoride salts; calcium salts; pyrophosphates; polyphosphates; antibacterial agents; cetylpyridinium chloride; chlorhexidine; essential oil mixtures containing menthol, eucalyptol, methyl salicylate, and thymol; botanical extracts; tooth desensitizing agents; potassium nitrate; plaque surface adhesion inhibitors; polydimethylsiloxane/surfactant; abrasive agents; silicas; surfactants; sodium laurel sulfate; and antibiotics.

Claim 34 (currently amended): A method for treating halitosis comprising the steps of chewing a chewing gum comprising a coated gum center including a water-soluble portion, a water-insoluble portion, wherein the ~~a coating that~~ at least substantially surrounds the gum center, the coating and gum center being prepared with a metal salt ingredient, the combined amount being including a therapeutically effective amount ~~of a metal salt~~.

Claim 35 (currently amended): ~~A~~ The method of treating halitosis of Claim 34, wherein the gum further includes in the ~~comprising the steps of chewing a chewing gum comprising a therapeutically effective amount of a metal salt, a gum center including a water-soluble portion, a water-insoluble portion, and a coating surrounding the gum center, including a cooling agent.~~

Claim 36 (canceled)

Claim 37 (original): The method of Claim 35 wherein the gum center and coating each include the metal salt.

Claim 38 (currently amended): The chewing gum product of Claim ~~24~~ 28 wherein the coating includes a surfactant.

Claim 39 (previously presented): The chewing gum product of Claim 38 wherein the surfactant is a non-ionic surfactant selected from the group consisting of poly (C₂-C₄-alkoxy) esters of C₁₈-C₂₀ fatty acids, C₄-C₂₀ alkyl poly (C₂-C₄-alkoxy) esters of C₈-C₂₀ fatty acids, poly (C₂-C₄ alkoxy) esters of sorbitan, poly (C₂-C₄ alkoxylated) – C₁-C₂₀ alcohols, polyethylene glycols, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 40 (previously presented): A chewing gum product comprising:
a gum center including a water-soluble portion and a water-insoluble portion; and
a coating including a copper salt.

Claim 41 (previously presented): The chewing gum of Claim 40 wherein the gum center and the coating each include the copper salt.

Claim 42 (previously presented): The chewing gum product of Claim 40 wherein the copper salt is selected from the group consisting of: copper stearate; copper acetate; copper gluconate; copper lactate; copper ammonium sulfate; copper chromate; copper citrate; copper dithionate; copper fluorosilicate; copper tartrate; copper formate; copper iodide; copper nitrate; copper phenol sulfonate; copper salicylate; copper sulfate; copper succinate; copper glycerophosphate; and copper halides.

Claim 43 (previously presented): The chewing gum product of Claim 40 wherein the coating includes an edible oil.

Claim 44 (previously presented): The chewing gum product of Claim 40 wherein the coating includes a cooling agent.

Claim 45 (previously presented): The chewing gum of Claim 44 wherein the cooling agent is selected from the group consisting of: menthol; monomenthyl succinate and salts thereof; cyclic carboxamides; acyclic carboxamides; menthyl acetate; menthyl lactate; menthone ketals; 3-menthoxypropane-1,2 diol; and mixtures thereof.

Claim 46 (previously presented): The chewing gum product of Claim 40 wherein the gum center includes a zinc salt selected from the group consisting of: zinc stearate; zinc acetate; zinc gluconate; zinc lactate; zinc ammonium sulfate; zinc chromate; zinc citrate; zinc dithionate; zinc fluorosilicate; zinc tartrate; zinc formate; zinc iodide; zinc nitrate; zinc phenol sulfonate; zinc salicylate; zinc sulfate; zinc succinate; zinc glycerophosphate; and zinc halides.

Claim 47 (previously presented): The chewing gum product of Claim 40 including at least one beneficial component selected from the group consisting of: fluoride salts; calcium salts; pyrophosphates; polyphosphates; antibacterial agents; cetylpyridinium chloride; chlorhexidine; essential oil mixtures containing menthol, eucalyptol, methyl salicylate, and thymol; botanical extracts; tooth desensitizing agents; potassium nitrate; plaque surface adhesion inhibitors; polydimethylsiloxane / surfactant; abrasive agents; silicas; surfactants; sodium laurel sulfate; and antibiotics.

Claim 48 (previously presented): The chewing gum product of Claim 40 wherein the coating includes a surfactant.

Claim 49 (previously presented): The chewing gum product of Claim 48 wherein the surfactant is a non-ionic surfactant selected from the group consisting of poly (C₂-C₄-alkoxy) esters of C₁₈-C₂₀ fatty acids, C₄-C₂₀ alkyl poly (C₂-C₄-alkoxy) esters of C₈-C₂₀ fatty acids, poly (C₂-C₄ alkoxy) esters of sorbitan, poly (C₂-C₄ alkoxylated) – C₁-C₂₀ alcohols, polyethylene glycols, and mixtures thereof.